

Mini Mountain, Sports Training Facility Bellevue WA

“It’s a neat system. It makes us look very professional. And I don’t need my additional person anymore.” -

- Jim Mercer, Manager

Company Description

Mini Mountain is an indoor sport training facility located in the suburbs of Seattle, just 45 minutes from the Snoqualmie recreational area. It is a unique facility specializing in snow skiing and snow boarding lessons on an indoor ski slope simulated by three 12’ wide treadmills. It also has a rock wall and a batting cage.

Mini Mountain draws many of its customers from among the employees of large companies in the area. Whole families, including children from the age of two and seniors past the age of 70, sign up for lessons. Lessons are offered in 20-minute increments from 9:00 in the morning to 9:00 in the evening on weekdays, and from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on Saturdays. Advanced skiers also use the facility for aerobic conditioning. When all three ramps are fully employed, Mini Mountain accommodates 108 sessions per day.

Many of the teachers employed at the facility work part time. Most teach only during the winter months, and offer lessons at Snoqualmie as well. In one particularly busy season, Mini Mountain employed 275 different instructors.

Situation

Until two years ago, Mini Mountain was using a combination appointment book – card system to manage their instructors and keep track of students and lessons. They recorded the lessons a student paid for in advance on a card, then crossed them off as they were used. Each student had a card in the file.

“This worked well at the beginning, but, as the store’s popularity began to grow, manual tracking and recording became a problem. The instructors would forget to cross off a lesson,” stated Manager Jim Mercer.

Mini Mountain also adopted a policy that required no-shows to be charged to the student, while legitimate

cancellations could be re-scheduled. When it got busy there were problems. “Handwriting became so illegible that you couldn’t read what the instructor had written,” said Jim. Other times they wouldn’t have time to pull the student’s card to make the adjustment, and then they’d forget. We just had to take the student’s word for it.

“The busier we became, the worse it got. I’m sure we gave many more lessons than were ever paid for. Finally, we hired someone just to keep track of it,” he said.

But, even with the additional help it was an imperfect system at best, according to Jim. “Cards would get lost. And if students forgot their appointments it was nearly impossible to find them in the book,” he said.

Solution

In 1999, Jim Mercer decided to find a computer-based scheduling solution for Mini Mountain’s ramp classes. He knew what they needed – a scheduler that looked a lot like what they were already doing. It had to accommodate a 20-minute lesson, and track the lessons bought and received by each student. Other than that, he had few requirements. But, he wouldn’t buy something that would be difficult for his people to get used to.

Jim spent several weeks downloading demos from the Internet and trying them out. Many didn’t look very intuitive. Others would not allow the user to change lesson times.

“I came across the SpectraSoft solution during this process,” explained Jim. “It was simple to figure out, and it felt right. I could see it would allow us to set our own lesson times, and the price was right, so we bought it,” he said.

Mini Mountain bought Appointments Professional by SpectraSoft in the summer of 1999, and upgraded to AppointmentsPRO™ when it was released in 2000.

Case Study - SpectraSoft AppointmentsPRO

The facility is currently running a single user version of AppointmentsPRO 5.0

Results

“To our great relief, the software does exactly what we were looking for,” said Jim. Now, we just enter the number of appointments credited to a student, and AppointmentsPRO keeps track of it. Every time I close out the day, it re-calculates the total and feeds back the number remaining. I can print out a report if I want and the information is just there.

“It also has some nice features I didn’t anticipate,” he said. “For instance, it’s really convenient to see the student’s phone number just by mousing over the lesson schedule. Now when I have to cancel a lesson or re-schedule one, the phone number is right there. I don’t have to find the card or look it up.

“I can also block the time if we need to close a ramp so we don’t schedule lessons on it. I can archive records if they get too old, and still have the information if I need it. And, I can use the notes field to remind my people to charge for more lessons if we scheduled beyond what the student paid,” he added.

“We use the program’s color coding facility to distinguish ski lessons from snow boarding, and to identify students by different age groups. This has helped us a lot to schedule our instructors were their skills apply best,” said Jim.

“It’s also no trouble to give students a list of their lessons. They love that! And so do I – especially during ski season. It has probably cut way down on our no-shows,” he said.

Jim learned that AppointmentsPRO™ was designed to manage appointments for Physical Therapy and Rehab, but he was not concerned. The program proved flexible enough to meet his own scheduling needs.

“I don’t know what you could do to make the product any more adaptable,” said Jim – especially since AppointmentsPRO™. We changed all the field names, so now it looks like the software was designed for Mini Mountain,” he said.

“It’s just a neat system. It makes us look very professional. And I don’t need my additional person anymore,” he concluded.

Contacts

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About SpectraSoft

SpectraSoft Inc. is a leading developer of Windows-based appointment scheduling and resource management software. SpectraSoft’s signature products, *Appointmentware*™, *AppointmentsPRO*™, and *AppointmentsES*™ are installed in more than 3000 facilities nationwide. SpectraSoft’s products have been developed specifically for healthcare and other service oriented industries. For more information and a free demo please contact a sales representative at 1-800-889-0450 or visit our website at www.ssoft.com.